[English]

Development of Sambhar Salt Area

6617. SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Sambhar Salt area in Rajasthan was leased to M/s. Hindustan Salts Ltd. for the integrated development; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith steps taken by the Hindustan Salt Ltd. for integrated development of the area ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) Sambhar Salt area was leased to Sambhar Salts Ltd., a subsidiary of Hindustan Salts Ltd.

(b) A sum of Rs. 3.51 crores has been invested in the shape of loans and interest due for various development works including construction of Gudha/ Jhapog dam, borewells, installation of equipment, conversion of MG railway line into BG line and setting up of salt washery.

Export of Cotton

6618. SHRI T. GOPAL KRISHNA : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) the quota allotted for export of cotton during 1996-97;

(b) the actual shipments upto the March, 1997; and

(c) the reasons for shortfall in export of cotton ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA) : (a) An export quota of 12.41 lakh bales of cotton has been released so far in the 1996-97 cotton season.

(b) As against the export quota of 12.41 lakh bales of cotton, the actual shipment upto 25th March, 1997 was 3.96 lakh bales.

(c) In respect of most of the agencies to which export quota has been allotted, the shipment period has been given upto September, 1997. It is too early to say that there has been a shortfall in export of cotton.

Voluntary Retirement Scheme in STC

6619. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the State Trading Corporation (STC) has identified some staff as surplus;

(b) if so the details thereof;

(c) whether the State Trading Corporation has introduced Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) for these surplus staff;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the number of persons so far opted for the Voluntary Retirement Scheme ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b) In the wake of decanalisation of commodities for export and import earlier canalised through STC and the resultant drop in the turnover, STC engaged National Productivity Council (NPC), New Delhi in 1991 to make a detailed personnel audit to identify the surplus manpower. NPC identified nearly 29% of the total manpower of 2560 in STC as surplus.

(c) to (e) Yes, Sir. STC introduced Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) for a limited period at different intervals of time to achieve optimum manpower utilisation as a result of which 676 persons have so far taken voluntary retirement.

Export from North-East Region

6620. SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether his Ministry have formulated any plan to give a thrust on promoting exports from the North-East region;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether his Ministry is considering at least two other proposals to focus on the region; and

(d) if so, the details of these two proposals and by what time these proposals are likely to be implemented ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b) As a part of an on-going effort, the Ministry of Commerce takes appropriate steps to give thrust for promotion of exports from the country as a whole and also specifically from the North Eastern Region. The Ministry also proposes to draw out a specific export plan for the North Eastern Region and a study has been entrusted to the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade in this regard. Further, as per the EXIM Policy 1997-2002, Export Houses, Star Trading Houses, etc. will be given special import licence at 1% of